

***NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE INSTRUCTION 30-116-01
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***Administration and Operations
Accepting Email Comments***

ACCEPTING EMAIL COMMENTS: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING SOPs

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Accepting email Comments Guidelines for Developing Standard Operating Procedures

To ensure that electronic commenting is conducted uniformly across the Agency, we recommend that each Regional Office and Science Center, as necessary, develop and document standard operating procedures (SOPs) for creating mailboxes, accepting and processing comments and collecting meaningful comment statistics. These guidelines are intended to serve as a framework for developing the procedures in the context of the policies and procedures discussed in the "Accepting Email Comments Policy" document. The following provides suggested SOPs to be modified as appropriate for each Region and Center.

Before FR document publication:

Mailboxes must be open no later than the date of the comment period opening. At least one week before the filing of each FR document, the Rule Writer will send an email to the FMC Mail Administrator requesting establishment of a new mailbox for the FR document and specify the mailbox name and the starting and ending dates of the public comment period. If a general mailbox is used for more than one FR document, the Rule Writer will notify the FMC Mail Administrator at least one week before document publication that the availability of the mailbox for public comments will be announced in a new and forthcoming FR document publication.

Within two working days of notification by the Rule Writer, the FMC Mail Administrator will create a new email account for the FR document and notify the Rule Writer as soon as the mailbox is established. The Rule Writer or mailbox Owner will assign a new password (according to DOC policy) and set up new profile on his or her desktop.

During the comment period:

The Rule Writer will check the comment mailbox daily and notify the Mail Administrator in the event of apparent spamming. The Rule Writer will move email comments from the mailbox to a separate folder on a network drive at intervals necessary to reduce the risk of overloading the mailbox server.

After the comment period closes:

Mailboxes must be closed at or as soon as practicable after noon of the first day following the close of the comment period.

The Rule Writer will move all email comments to a folder on a network drive to reduce the volume of mail on the server.

The Rule Writer will notify the Mail Administrator by email when to close the mailbox at or as soon as practicable after, noon of the first day following the close of the comment period. Upon instructions from the Rule Writer, the FMC Mail Administrator will close the mailbox (i.e., delete the functional user and associated mailbox).